



The fast-paced economic activities, proposed international airport and availability of the latest amenities, is convincing buyers to make Navi Mumbai their home **NIKITA PEER** elaborates

# NAVI MUMBAI: THE PREFERRED CHOICE



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The level of infrastructural development, improvement in social amenities and increase in economic activities has pushed up real estate prices of Navi Mumbai like never before. Housing prices have increased by an average 66 per cent in Mumbai over the last four years on account of steady demand and rising input cost, according to property consultant Jones Lang LaSalle India. Among the various belts in Mumbai, the appreciation in Navi Mumbai is the highest (about 74 per cent). In the past, price was a major driver for the Navi Mumbai real estate market but now these properties are almost as expensive as other suburbs of Mumbai. The promising part is that the increase in price has not affected saleability, though it has challenged affordability. This is due to the fact that with the increasing prices, the developers perceived the need to reduce apartment sizes in order to maintain a comfortable level of affordability. On an average, Navi Mumbai witnessed apartment size reduction of 18 per cent.

It is no wonder then that Navi Mumbai continues to witness serious investor interest, which is also guided by infrastructure improvements in the region and the proposed development of the airport. Navi Mumbai, as a unique economic microcosm with relatively well-planned infrastructure and connectivity, has proved to be something of

a game-changer.

According to Ravi Ahuja, executive director, Cushman & Wakefield, "Navi Mumbai has witnessed a phenomenal growth of residential real estate over the years. With quality infrastructure and the presence of necessary social infrastructure, the destination emerged as a favourite among end-users, resulting in capital values growing over the years. Further, increased speculation due to infrastructure projects like the new airport and the proposed sea link have led to high prices in Ulwe, which currently does not even have basic infrastructure in place. Panvel has also seen capital values increase at a high pace due to announcements of these infrastructure projects." The eastern freeway will also provide the much needed speedy connectivity from the island city to the eastern suburbs and to Navi Mumbai, Panvel, Pune and Goa.

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**MCHI CREDAI NAVI  
MUMBAI AND RAIGAD  
EXPO 2013,**  
to be held from  
**October 11-14, 2013,**  
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Palm Beach road in Navi Mumbai has worked wonders for the commuters of the satellite city. In fact, the entire Palm Beach road has become the most desirable address in Navi Mumbai. Besides the infrastructure, the Vashi-Nerul belt has several large format malls and other sources of entertainment, making it a shopper's paradise. Among all the clusters in Mumbai, it has witnessed the second highest completion of high-end residences in the past three years. The mall culture among households is quite high, as the cluster lacks high-streets.

With all these positives in close proximity, the lesser known nodes of Karanjade, Ulwe and Dronagiri in Navi Mumbai that are currently being developed by CIDCO, are already witnessing increasing interest from investors due to their proximity to the proposed airport. Panvel and New Panvel, being designed and developed by CIDCO, has great potential for commercial as well as the residential development. The most-talked about, proposed Navi Mumbai international airport, which is to come up in Panvel-Kopra, has helped real estate by pegging up the residential prices by 25-30 per cent since 2010 and various top players like Indiabulls Real Estate, Hiranandani Developers, etc., have started projects with huge land parcels. The residential property rate in Panvel is in the price range of Rs 4,500-6,500 per sq ft.

According to a Kalpataru spokesperson, "Like any other developed city, Panvel enjoys the best connectivity in terms

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of roadways and railways. It is an important junction point where multiple highways meet. The Mumbai-Pune expressway, Sion-Panvel expressway, NH-4B and NH-17 start from here, while the NH-4 passes through Panvel. The roads are wide and well-maintained by the local municipal corporations. With the growth in infrastructural and development of various offices and corporate houses in Navi Mumbai, there has been an increase in the residential demand. With the kind of development that Navi Mumbai is poised for, it definitely will offer good returns for investors."

The highest focus will be on Panvel and its immediately adjoining areas, since Panvel is Navi Mumbai's last node and also the ingress for the Mumbai-Pune expressway. An immediate focus

on the development of physical and social infrastructure in the region will ensure that this region maintains its attractiveness as a destination on the Mumbai real estate map. The timely completion of the proposed projects could further boost residential real estate in Navi Mumbai. Major infrastructure projects like the proposed Navi Mumbai international airport and the Sewri-Nhava Mumbai trans-harbour link, are hailed as catalysts for the region's growth. The airport, to be spread over 2,072 hectares near Ulwe, is struggling to acquire 291 hectares of private land in the face of stiff opposition from locals. The harbour link, which will reduce the commute time to south Mumbai significantly, recently failed to attract bidders even in the third attempt.

Mayur Shah, managing director, Marathon Group, adds, "The proposed development including the Navi Mumbai international airport, the availability of residential property to suit every pocket and lifestyle aspiration, superlative connectivity across the state and forecasted growth potential of the region, make Navi Mumbai the ideal residential location. With the speedy industrial development in and around Navi Mumbai, the demand for residential properties is expected to rise. If one is seeking to purchase a dream home at an affordable price, Navi Mumbai seems to be an ideal location as the area is well-connected and has developers offering homes which are affordable and embedded with all modern facilities and amenities which make for a comfortable, affordable and lavish lifestyle."

The speedy execution of Navi Mumbai airport is an 'absolute must' for the infrastructure of the planned city, according to Rajesh Prajapati, president of the developers' body MCHI-CREDAI-Raigad unit. Developers who are active in the belt say that they are prepared to play their role in ensuring quality of construction to match the airport standards, provided all clearances are done on time. In fact, a huge area around the airport is bound to witness a boom with the potential of tremendous employment generation and improvement of the quality of life here.